

Kentucky Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2001

Training to answer questions about performance descriptions

By Faun S. Fishback

Kentucky Department of Education

What are student performance standards, and how can I use them to help my students learn at higher levels? How can I use the performance-level descriptions to improve my classroom instruction?

Kentucky teachers will find the answers to these and other questions about Kentucky's new performance standards during training sessions in their schools this fall. Teams of teachers and administrators will lead the sessions.

The school-level sessions will help teachers and school administrators understand how to use the performance-level descriptions, student work and testing data to move their students to proficiency and beyond, said Marcia Lile, a Department of Education social studies consultant and co-team leader for the department's Student Proficiency Cross-Agency Team.

Between Sept. 24 and Oct. 24, school teams comprised of two teachers and an administrator from each school will complete two days of training in their region. Each district office also will send a three-person team to the training. These "train the trainers" sessions will provide experiences and materials that teams can take back to their schools and districts to train teachers, administrators, local board members, school-based councils, PTA groups and parents on the performance-level descriptions.

The training and school-level work sessions will have three components:

- Familiarizing educators with the performance standards-setting process;
 - Using actual student work and the performance-level descriptions from the standards-setting process to understand how well students need to perform;
 - Learning how to use the performance-level descriptions and the school's test data to make decisions and plans for teaching and learning in the school.
- More than 1,600 teachers developed

Kentucky's student performance standards. The teachers used a variety of methods, designed by national testing experts, to clarify what is meant by novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished student performance for each content area and grade level tested annually in Kentucky.

The first step in the standards-setting process was the development of the performance-level descriptions. These descriptions are a companion to Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment, which specifies what students need to know at each grade level and in every content area. The performance-level descriptions serve as guides to tell how well a student must perform at each level and in every content area to be judged as novice, apprentice, proficient or distinguished on the Kentucky Core Content Tests, said Lile, who is helping coordinate the training.

During the school-level sessions, teachers will participate in four activities using the student performance descriptions and actual student work. "Teachers can see what proficient work looks like with actual student work," said Lile. "Teachers will see how to use the performance-level descriptions to analyze their own students' work and to craft their instruction to move students to proficiency. We also will have information on moving students from proficient into the distinguished level."

The third component will show faculties how to use data from the Kentucky Core Content Tests to make decisions about changing their instruction to fit student needs. "This year is the first time schools will receive scale scores for their students," said Lile. "It is important that they understand what those scale scores mean relative to student performance."

All printed materials used during the school-level sessions will be available by late September on the Web. The department will notify superintendents and principals when they are posted. KET will broadcast videos used during the sessions. The 30-minute videos,



Photo by Rick McComb

Wired for Sound

Students in any part of teacher Sharon Warren's classroom can hear her as clearly as if she is next to them, thanks to a system that amplifies and clarifies the sound of her voice. Warren and the other teachers at Highland Elementary in Daviess County are using the tiny head-set microphones, turning them off when they want to speak only to individual students and small groups. The system went schoolwide this year after last year's trial run in early primary yielded positive results: increased attention, more-immediate student response, increased involvement in class discussion, less repetition of presented material, improved listening skills and lower levels of teacher fatigue at the end of the day. Superintendent Stu Silberman said the technology could become standard equipment in all of the district's classrooms if this year's schoolwide pilot yields positive results.

produced by the Kentucky Department of Education, will air free to schools on Tuesday, Oct. 16, at 10:30 a.m.; Friday, Oct. 19, at 3:30 p.m.; and again on Monday, Oct. 29, at 3:30 p.m. on Star Channel 703. All materials can be downloaded and duplicated; the video

broadcasts can be taped.

Around Sept. 30, the department will send each school a CD-ROM containing all the training materials, videos and electronic presentations, which can be loaded on the school's proxy server for all staff to access.

Scores on national tests show how far we've come

By Gene Wilhoit
Commissioner of Education

Congratulations, Kentucky students, parents, educators and communities! The results of three national standardized tests show the entire nation what we already know: that Kentucky schools are improving and Kentucky students are becoming better prepared to meet the challenges of the world beyond high school. Yes, we have a long way to go to our goal, but we are making progress.

The most recent indicator came in August from the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, or CTBS. Results of last spring's testing showed that Kentucky's end-of-primary students made two- and three-point gains in all three areas tested: reading comprehension, language arts/writing and mathematics. Students in grades 6 and 9 showed smaller but still significant gains.

This marks the first time Kentucky students have reached or surpassed the national average on this assessment. CTBS scores, along with scores from the Kentucky Core Content Tests and non-academic indicators, will be part of each school's accountability index for the first cycle of our long-term accountability model.

Just as exciting were last month's reports from the mathematics section of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as NAEP and "the nation's report card." The NAEP is generally considered to be the only test given in the U.S. that provides valid results that can be compared from state to state.

In 2000, samples of students in grades 4 and 8 in 40 states took the NAEP in mathematics. Kentucky's 8th-graders did especially well, boosting their average by five points over their score in 1996, the last time the assessment was administered. At 272 on NAEP's 500-point scale, Kentucky's 8th-graders exceeded the region's score by seven points and came within two points of the national average of 274.

Kentucky 4th-graders improved in mathematics by one point to 221 on the NAEP, one point higher than the southeast's average score and within five points of the nation's. I think our 4th-grade scores reflect some of the changes brought

about by the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. Fourth-graders made a five-point leap in mathematics on the NAEP between 1992 and 1996. In 1998, the state's mathematics assessment moved from grade 4 to grade 5, and many professional development opportunities are geared to – and sought by – teachers in the assessment grades. Another factor in the smaller gain between 1996 and 2000 may have been the discontinuation of the mathematics portfolio. We intend to take a close look at these issues.

Kentucky's scores on a third national assessment, the ACT, were virtually the same in 2001 as in 2000. Our college-bound students who took this college readiness test scored a composite 20.1, barely edging past the southeastern regional average and within one point of the nation's composite score.

A higher percentage of Kentucky high school seniors took the ACT test in 2001 than in 2000. Typically we would expect the score to remain the same or even drop when a higher percentage of students take the test. Our score did not drop. That's because more of our students are taking rigorous courses, apparently aspiring to college, and working hard to prepare for the ACT.

Why are more students choosing stronger courses? For one thing, all Kentucky public universities and community colleges require students to take the ACT prior to admission. Students do better on that test if they have taken what ACT defines as its college core: four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science and social studies. Secondly, but not coincidentally, Kentucky's recently adopted graduation requirements include those same course requirements. We think every student, whether college-bound or not, needs and deserves a solid academic background. Because of this commitment to all students, college will become an option for more of our graduating seniors. I think we'll see more students taking the ACT, and I think we'll see higher scores in the long term.

Kentucky's results on these three national tests are still lower than we want

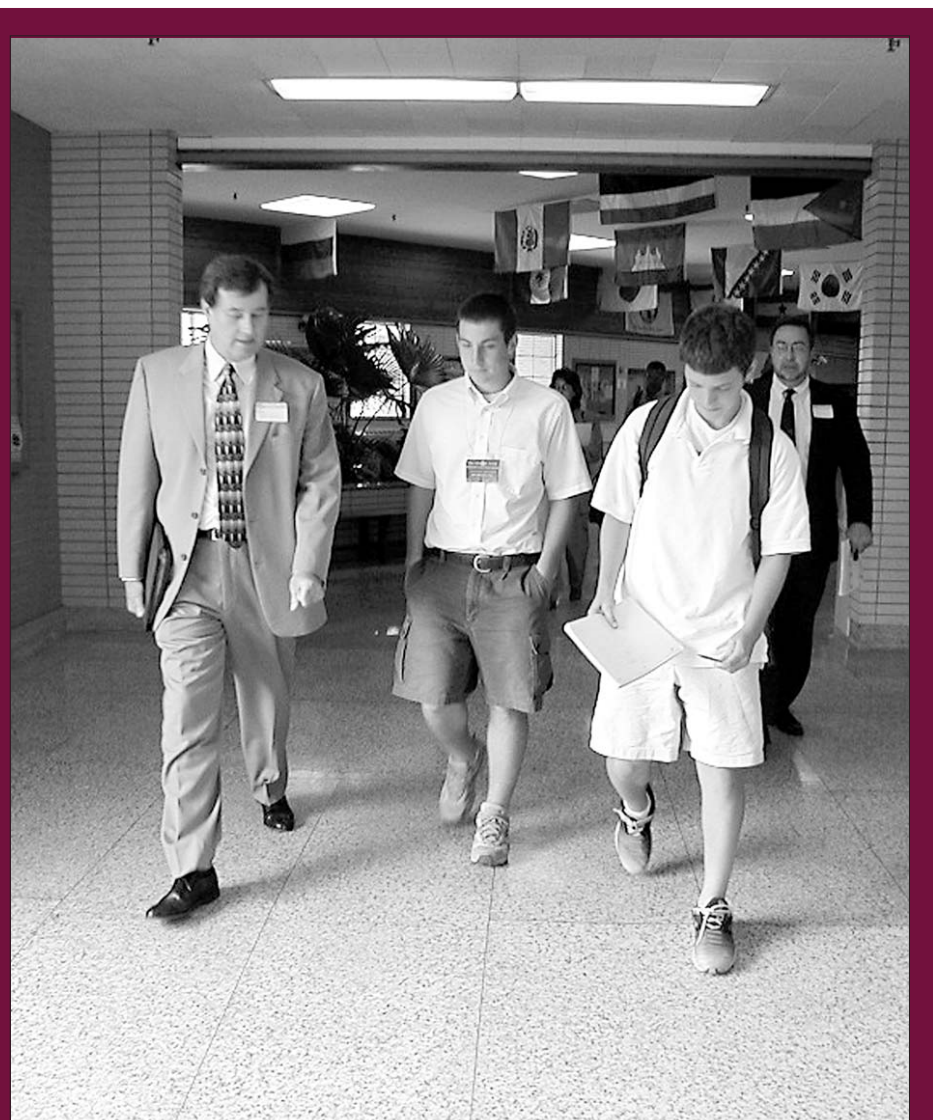


Photo by Rick McComb

On-the-Spot Reporting

Student journalists David Gross and Ed Lukins interview Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit "on the fly" at Atherton High School in Jefferson County. Wilhoit was on one of his frequent visits to high-performing teachers and schools. On this trip he talked with Stephen Lin, Atherton's choral music teacher and Kentucky's Teacher of the Year 2002. Such visits, Wilhoit said, give him a first-person look at strategies that support success for students.

them to be, but they are signs of how far we've come. I am pleased with the news and optimistic about what the future will bring. I salute all of you who are working so hard to improve education for Kentucky's children.

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To reply to the commissioner, phone (502) 564-3141 or send e-mail to

gwillhoit@kde.state.ky.us.

District and school CTBS results are available from school district offices or online at www.kentuckyschools.org.

More information about NAEP is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

For information about the ACT, including national and state scores, see www.act.org.

Charts tell the story of academic progress

For the first time, Kentucky students have reached or surpassed the national average on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. They also made a good showing on two other national assessments: the ACT, which measures the potential for academic success in college,

and the mathematics portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the “nation’s report card.”

On Page 2, Commissioner Gene Wilhoit comments on what this news means. The charts on this page tell the story in numbers.

CTBS

Numbers are national percentiles. For example, Kentucky 6th-graders who took the test in 2001 scored higher in reading than 54 percent of their peers in the nation.

	Reading					Language/Writing				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
3rd Grade	49	50	51	55	58	48	49	50	53	55
6th Grade	53	53	52	53	54	50	50	50	51	51
9th Grade	52	51	51	52	52	49	48	47	48	49

	Mathematics					Total Battery				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
3rd Grade	49	48	51	55	58	50	50	52	55	58
6th Grade	49	49	49	50	51	50	50	50	52	52
9th Grade	44	45	46	47	48	48	48	48	49	50

ACT

Kentucky’s year 2001 college-bound seniors posted a composite score (English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning) of 20.1, compared to 20.0 for students in the 11-state southeastern region and 21.0 for the nation as a whole. The gaps between Kentucky and national scores ranged from 1.3 points in mathematics and 0.7 points in reading. The percentage of Kentucky students taking the test and the percentage taking rigorous courses are on the rise.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number Tested	27,447	28,210	28,745	29,670	30,084
Number Taking Rigorous Courses	10,106 (37%)	12,265 (43%)	12,694 (44%)	13,885 (47%)	14,506 (48%)

NAEP

In 2000, the nation’s 4th- and 8th-graders took the mathematics portion of the NAEP, generally considered to be the only test that provides valid results that can be compared from state to state. Kentucky students at both grade levels improved their scores from testing in 1996. The score range for the NAEP mathematics assessment is 0-500.

Average 4th-Grade Mathematics Scores*			
	Average Scale Scores		
	1992	1996	2000
Kentucky	214	220	221
Southeast	210	216	220
Nation	219	222	226

*NAEP did not sample 4th-graders in mathematics in 1990.

Average 8th-Grade Mathematics Scores				
	Average Scale Scores			
	1990	1992	1996	2000
Kentucky	257	262	267	272
Southeast	254	259	264	265
Nation	262	267	271	274

Percentages of Public School Students Attaining Achievement Levels – NAEP Mathematics 2000

	4th-Grade				8th-Grade			
	Below Basic				Below Basic	At or Above Basic		
		At or Above Basic						
			At or Above Proficient				At or Above Proficient	
				Advanced				Advanced
Kentucky	41	59	17	1	40	40	18	3
Southeast	41	59	19	2	47	53	18	3
Nation	35	65	23	2	36	64	26	5

Focusing on high expectations for every student is making a big difference at our school

By Micah Hicks
Teacher, Walker Elementary

Editor's Note: Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit frequently reinforces his belief that successful schools are those in which educators hold high expectations for all students and work collaboratively to align curriculum with "Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment." In the following commentary, a primary teacher describes how adopting those two elements have brought positive changes to her school. She wrote this letter to the commissioner on May 2, 2001.

I have some suggestions for schools and administrators who do not have high expectations for their students. Here's a list that we started with:

1. We saw a need for a drastic change!
2. Our principal went to one of the better-performing schools in our area and asked educators there what they did to be successful. (There is NO quick answer! Time and money will need to be spent by every person involved in the education of a child.)
3. First of all, everyone must become involved and have the same goals. We (my fellow teachers and I) visited a school where everyone was working together with very high expectations. This was a school with students of the same socioeconomic background as ours, with great academic performance.
4. Our principal spent much time learning how that school made progress. She found answers to questions we had expressed in the past. Realizing that we had no control over some issues, we could no longer use those issues as an excuse for any students not achieving.
5. Newly learned strategies were shared with the staff. Then, we were given direction toward where we needed to go in order for our students to benefit the most.
6. The decision to incorporate full-time kindergarten was a big factor in our school's success. This allowed us to double our time with children at a critical

stage in their development. In partnership with our local school board, we agreed to use Title I Funds to make full-time kindergarten a reality for our school in 1999-2000. Our local board also continued its commitment to primary education by using teachers from the federal class size reduction act to lower 1st-grade class size from 24 to 17. This concentrated effort allowed for more individualized instruction that better met student needs.

7. We found a new program – SING, SPELL, READ AND WRITE – that has helped dramatically. I've seen children who might otherwise "fall through the cracks" learn and be successful in reading.

8. In 1999, we spent one whole week of professional development time aligning our curriculum to state and district guidelines. Believe me when I say this was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do as an educator. We became thoroughly familiar with the state's Core Content for Assessment document. It was our best friend for the entire week and has been for about three years now. This was our guidepost. We used it to build our overall curriculum, then break that down into what needed to be taught each nine-week period. Then we went even further and broke our curriculum down and listed what was to be taught on a daily basis. This was tedious work, but it was well worth the time and effort. That year was the hardest and best year of teaching I have had in my entire life! You can ask any teacher in Walker Elementary. I think they would say the same thing.

That was not the end of our push. We continue each year to improve our curriculum and make changes.

I guess this is my point: We saw the need for change, and we were willing to change. Teachers need to be approached effectively. Being a dictator is not effective! Having teachers feel that the work is theirs will help them buy into change.

We are grateful to administrators from Roundstone Elementary in



Photo by Linda Jones, Wayne County Public Schools

Walker Elementary teacher Micah Hicks posed with Jordan Slagle (left) and Garrett Bradley, the top finishers in the school's basketball shootout last March. Hicks coordinated the event, which was part of an annual fundraising campaign.

Rockcastle County for their help in guiding us through the improvement process. Our CTBS test scores escalated by 14.2 points over the two-year period following our major changes. (Our district administers CTBS in more grades than the state requires.)

We now know what is expected of our students and, more importantly,

what is expected of us as educators. We are willing to share what we've learned with other educators and schools.

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For more information about this school's changes, call Principal Winona Griggs at (606) 348-4251 or send e-mail to wgriggs@wayne.k12.ky.us.

Kentucky's Class of 2014

A Strong Start in Arts and Humanities

Katie Skeens and her classmates at Whitesville Elementary in Daviess County moved hoops through the air – high and low, side to side. Their physical education teacher, Amy Bouchard, was introducing them to one element of dance: movement through space.

This year's entry-level primary students – Kentucky's high school graduating class of 2014 – are building a foundation for what Kentucky citizens want them to know and be able to do in the arts and humanities by the time they receive their high school diplomas. Here is how their learning relates to some of the grade-by-grade expectations related to dance, as outlined in the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools:

Primary: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the elements of dance; explore and demonstrate locomotor (walk, run, hop, jump, leap, skip, slide, gallop) and nonlocomotor (bend, stretch, twist, swing) movements; and use those movements in simple patterns.



Grade 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to perform a dance alone, with a partner and in a small group using the three elements of movement (space, time, force); describe how locomotor and nonlocomotor movements are used to create simple dances; and create and perform in a small group simple dances with a beginning, middle and end using a combination of movements.



Grade 8: Students will recognize how movement elements are used to create overall aesthetic effects in dance; use appropriate terminology to analyze, interpret and evaluate how various combinations of dance elements help express ideas, thoughts and feelings; and analyze how dance movements differ from other movements.



High School: Students will describe the process of making dance and how space, time and force are used to create and communicate meaning; describe and analyze the effect music, costumes, lighting, props and scenery have on the choreographic idea of dance; and describe how performers use elements of dance in various dance styles and improvisation.

For more about what this year's entry-level primary students are learning in the arts – and how it starts them on the road to meeting Kentucky's high school graduation requirements – see the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools. The document is available free of charge online (go to www.kentuckyschools.org and select "Program of Studies" in the drop-down menu). It is also available for purchase from the KDE Bookstore. Select "Bookstore" on the department's Web site or contact Windy Newton at (502) 564-3421 or wnewton@kde.state.ky.us.

Coming in the next issue of Kentucky Teacher: The Class of 2014 embarks on learning in another core content area.

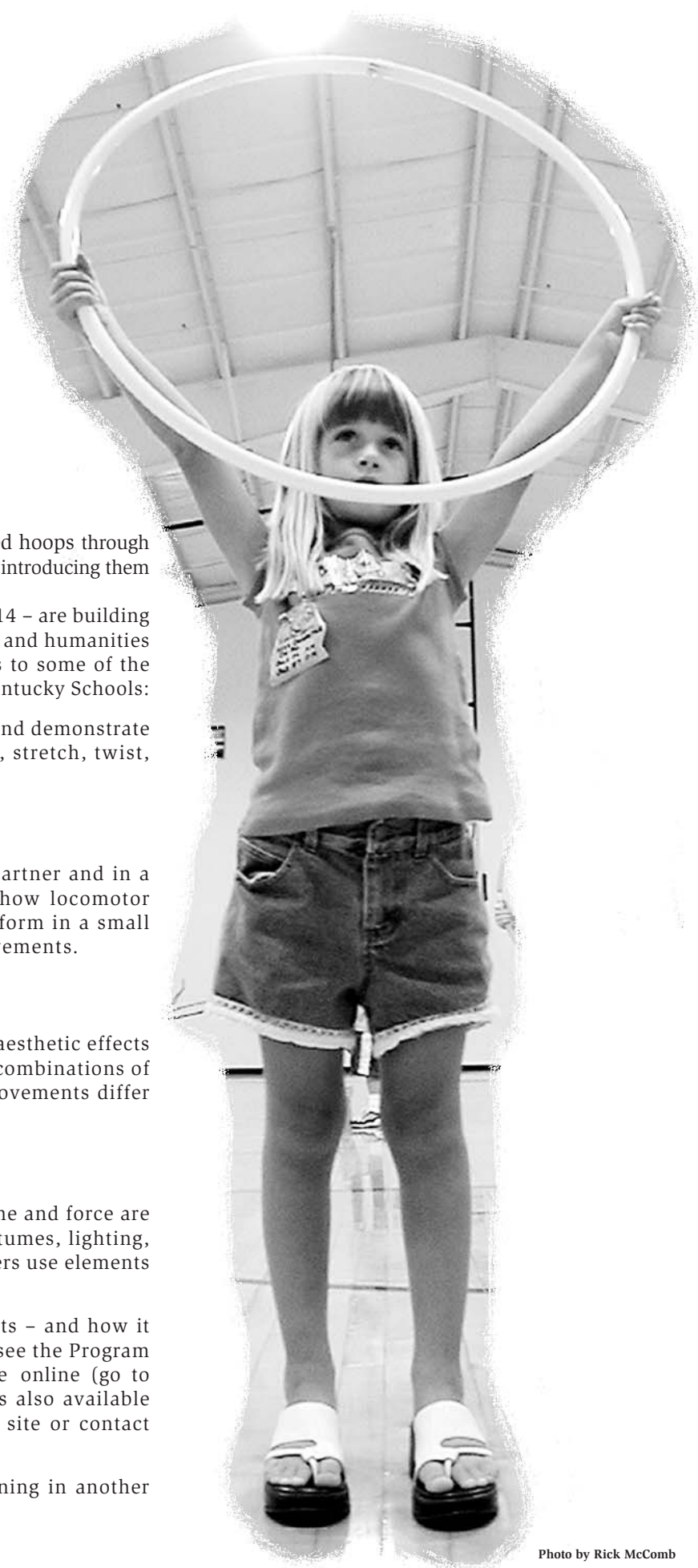


Photo by Rick McComb

'Newt' returns with more ideas for teaching with technology

By Fran Salyers

Kentucky Department of Education

After presenting last school year's series of lessons on online Internet basics, the "New to the 'Net" mascot is gearing up to help teachers get maximum mileage using their technology skills. Newt is packing his bags! For now, here's an overview of last year's lessons published in *Kentucky Teacher* and posted online:

- Lesson 1: An introduction to the Internet, the World Wide Web and Internet terminology
- Lesson 2: An overview of the vast Internet, how to use search engines to find what you need and how to bookmark your favorite sites
- Lesson 3: How, when and why to use the Kentucky Virtual Library and other databases
- Lesson 4: Where to find Kentucky Department of Education resources online and use them to plan standards-based instruction; how to network via e-mail
- Lesson 5: How to link your students to online resources, including the Kentucky Virtual High School
- Lesson 6: How to build project-based learning using the Internet and WebQuests
- Lesson 7: How to use the Internet to meet students' special needs
- Lesson 8: A catalog of Web sites that Kentucky teachers use and recommend
- Lesson 9: How to use what you've learned and "Filamentality" to build your own Web site for instruction

To review any or all of these lessons, go to www.kentuckyschools.org/newt

Plans for This Year

Where will Newt go this year? Virtually all over the world and beyond! Traveling with him will be new friends with a wealth of resources for teachers and students.

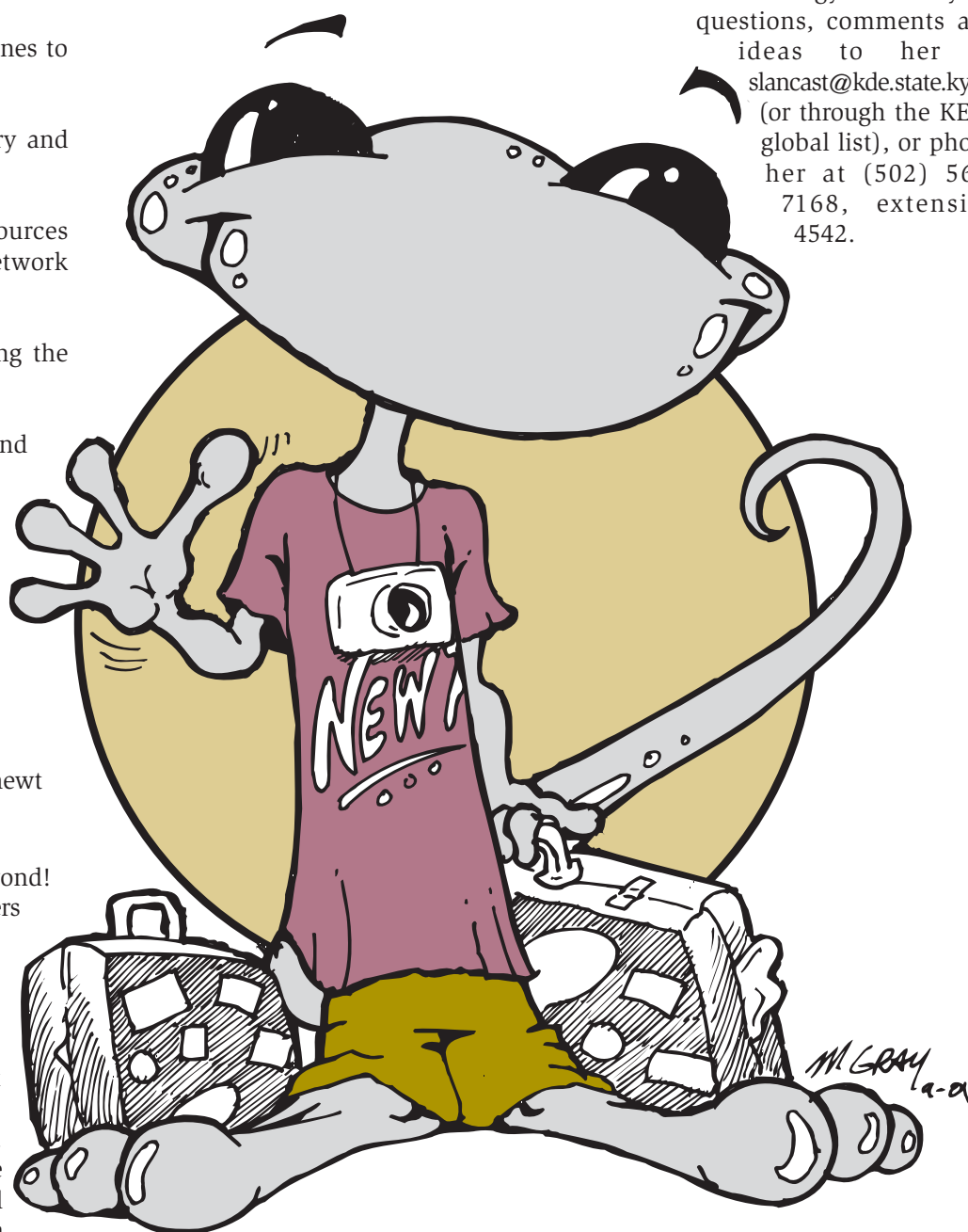
One of those friends is Marcopolo, a gateway for teachers searching for Internet-based teaching and learning opportunities. The Kentucky Department of Education and WorldCom Foundation have formed a partnership to give Kentucky teachers no-cost access to Marcopolo at <http://marcopolo.worldcom.com>. The site provides high-quality, standards-based, commercial-free Internet content for the K-12 classroom. Marcopolo leads to six discipline-specific Web sites produced by the nation's leading educational organizations. These sites feature original content, educator-reviewed links to nationally respected Web sites, a

search engine that helps educators find important information quickly, and rich supplemental lessons and resources across these curriculum areas: the arts, economics, geography, humanities, mathematics and science.

Throughout this school year, Newt and Marcopolo will guide teachers to online professional development opportunities; theme-related, content-specific and interdisciplinary lessons plans for all grade levels; tips for imbedding the use of technology into instruction; and online learning and communication activities.

Your mentor for this year's series will be Susan Lancaster of the Department of Education's Division of School Instructional Technology. E-mail your

questions, comments and ideas to her at slancast@kde.state.ky.us (or through the KETS global list), or phone her at (502) 564-7168, extension 4542.



Wilhoit revives, strengthens advisory council system

By Joy Barr
Kentucky Department of Education

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit has convened eight advisory groups to guide the Kentucky Department of Education's support for schools on the road to proficiency and beyond by 2014.

While former commissioners have named advisory panels in the past, Wilhoit has established a new system of managing these new, restructured or revived groups in a way that gives the department more frequent feedback and more consistent guidance from public education stakeholders.

"We depend on these critical groups for advice. They actually change the work we do and the way we do it," Wilhoit said. "Their suggestions often lead to new and better ways of supporting schools and districts and communicating important issues."

For example, based on feedback from several of the advisory groups, the department changed the way it is

providing training on the new standards for student performance. Instead of offering the same one-size-fits-all session to every segment of the education community, the department has tailored the training's content and delivery to meet the specific needs of teachers, administrators and other audiences.

Following up on recommendations from principals, the department has made more materials and tools available to districts via the Internet.

Presently the commissioner is asking the advisory groups to list the resources districts would need – from the department and elsewhere – to commit to a high goal: a dropout rate of zero.

Each advisory group's contributions support the Kentucky Board of Education's mission:

- to focus the efforts of the Department of Education, local schools, districts and education partners on helping schools reach proficiency or beyond by 2014;

- to assure that each child receives the maximum opportunity to achieve at high levels.

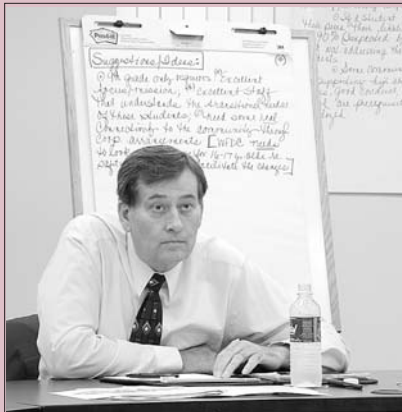
"This method for managing our advisory groups is working," Wilhoit said. "An organized system of public involvement serves us in two ways: We have the benefit of vigorous constructive public discussion of pending policy issues, and we can document that we routinely and systematically seek and act on the advice of a broad range of stakeholders."

While advisory committee members do not vote on policy issues, they do participate on the front end of the decision-making process, "and they do influence final outcomes for the better," Wilhoit said. "Through this open, collaborative public involvement, reasonable people will understand and accept decisions as being the result of a trustworthy process, even if they don't necessarily agree with every detail. These groups help the department focus its work on the real needs of schools and districts."

To respond to the commissioner on this topic, phone (502) 564-3141 or send an e-mail message to gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us. For details about the advisory groups, call Laura Graham at (502) 564-5130 or send e-mail to lgraham@kde.state.ky.us.

The Commissioner's Advisory Groups

- Commissioner's Education Equity Council
- Directors of Education Associations
- Local School Board Members Advisory Council
- Local Superintendents Advisory Council
- Parents Advisory Council
- Principals Advisory Council
- Superintendents Advisory Council
- Teachers Forum (first meeting Sept. 28 and 29)



Photos by Rick McComb

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit listens closely as members of the Commissioner's Education Equity Council discuss issues related to the academic achievement of minority students. The council is one of eight groups advising the commissioner and the Department of Education on the support services they provide to school districts and schools.



New attitudes and focused strategies keep special-needs students in school

By Carol Sturgill
Exceptional Children Director
Johnson County Schools

Like school districts everywhere, Johnson County Public Schools wanted to reduce the number of students leaving school before they graduated. Students were dropping out for various reasons, but our data revealed a major factor: 63 percent of our special-needs students were quitting before completing their high school programs. In a district with 120 identified special-needs students in the high school alone, we were losing a significant number of students each year.

Obviously, we were not going to improve our general dropout rate without doing something about our special student population. Almost seven years ago, we focused our efforts on retaining special-needs students in school. Five years later, the dropout rate of this group had decreased from 63 percent to 5 percent.

How did we do it? Many people did things to make it happen, but the greatest difference stemmed from teacher collaboration and student inclusion.

In 1994-95, the high school's special education teachers set out to determine why their students were leaving. After talking with school staff, enrolled students and students who had dropped out, they identified three main causes:

1. The students did not feel they were part of school, either socially or academically. Although some of them attended regular classes throughout the building, all of their resource classes were in our "special education wing."
2. Despite special education supports, many of them were failing academically.
3. They saw no link between school and the future.

With this information, we began taking steps. First, we attacked attitudes. All of us – regular education teachers, special education teachers, school and district staff and students themselves – had to change the way we thought about all students and what they "could learn and do."

Figuratively, we demolished the special education wing and moved all resource classes to their appropriate departments in the school. At first this was a problem for some of the special-needs students. While the wing had made them feel separated from other students, it had also become their "security blanket," a place where they could be with each other.

At that time, very few of our special education students were attending regular education classes in all academic areas. Many regular education teachers

did not want special education students in their classes. Most of our special education teachers worked in resource or self-contained classrooms and didn't feel important to the overall instructional process of the school.

We began taking steps toward collaboration and inclusion. We provided appropriate training; then each special education teacher teamed up with at least one regular education teacher for at least one class period. Teachers began to identify special education students who could function in the regular education setting. This required meetings of every special-needs student's individual education planning team, and it also required that we convince the guidance counselor to schedule our special education students first.

Thus collaboration and inclusion at Johnson Central High were born. Today, most of the special-needs students at the school are included in regular education classrooms for some part of their day. Sixty-one percent have all of their classes in regular classrooms. We continue to work on ways to increase inclusion of our students with mental disabilities, but we want to be sure that all inclusion is meaningful, not done just for its own sake.

Approximately one out of every seven students in Johnson County classrooms is a special-needs student. Looking at that statistic, we knew we had to do something to support the total school program by increasing test scores and reducing the dropout rate of students with disabilities. If we didn't, we were going to end up in a scholastic audit. Meanwhile we also had to assure that we were meeting the individual needs of our students. We chose collaboration/inclusion as an instructional strategy.

We are proud of the results:

- Most of Johnson County's high school and middle school special education teachers now collaborate with regular education teachers. Even a few who said collaboration/inclusion would never work now praise it.

- Regular education teachers welcome special education

students and collaborating teachers in their classrooms. They see how capable these students can be – and so do the students themselves.

- Academic inclusion has fostered social inclusion. Teachers and students recognize the talents and abilities of our students and get to know them as individuals. As a result, special-needs students are on the football, basketball and academic teams. One sang a solo at graduation. Another received a scholarship to Marshall University.

There is much more to say about Johnson County's commitment to improve the school experience for special-needs students, but the bottom line is attitude. We have changed our expectations of students with disabilities. We've come a long way, but we won't rest until the dropout rate is 0 percent.

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For details, contact Carol Sturgill at (606) 789-2530 or csturgill@johnson.k12.ky.us; or Principal Steve Trimble at (606) 789-2500 or sttrimble@johnson.k12.ky.us.



Photo by Rick McComb

Timmy McKenzie and teaching assistant Allen Lawson collaborate on a problem in electricity at Johnson Central High. Through focused efforts at making classroom instruction and social opportunities accessible to Timmy and all others with special learning needs, Johnson Central decreased the dropout rate among special-needs students from 63 percent to 5 percent in five years.

Barren County shines local spotlight on new, customized growth charts

While many districts may be discovering the communication value of new long-term accountability growth charts created in August for every school, the Barren County school district is the first to report its strategies.

In the August issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, Commissioner Gene Wilhoit urged districts and schools to put the charts to work as a communications tool and rallying point for school improvement. The state produces the charts to show the path between each school's "baseline" – where the school now stands based on academic performance on Kentucky Core Content Tests during the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 school years – and the goal of 100 or higher by the year 2014.

Here are a few of the ways the Barren County district is already putting the charts to work:

- The district enlarged each school's chart to an 11-by-17-inch, full-color glossy image, added the district's name and slogan, then matted and framed it for display in the school's lobby.
- A complete set of charts from every school is on display in the local district boardroom. Board members and the district superintendent can see them and refer to them during meetings with the public and with the district's administrative staff.
- The director of instruction has additional copies and access to even more copies to use as needed (for example, for distribution

during PTA/PTO meetings, community meetings and other events).

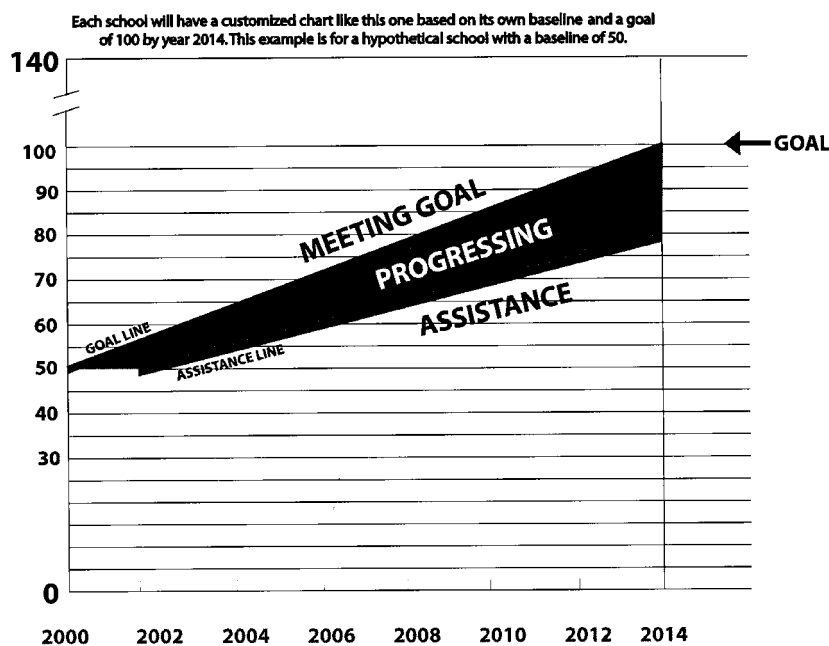
- The district's Web home page has a direct link to the growth charts so everyone in the community and beyond can view any or all of them at any time.
- A chart is on the cover of the professional portfolio the district requires of every administrator, assistant principal through assistant superintendent. "Placing the full-color growth chart on the front emphasizes and constantly reminds everyone that the number one priority is Proficiency by 2014," said Assistant Superintendent Bill Walter.
- The district will feature the school growth charts in the district's winter quarterly tabloid to be released along with the annual school report cards. The tabloid's theme will be "We're gaining steam – Proficiency by 2014!"

Tell us what your district is doing to get maximum mileage from customized school growth charts. Send your information to *Kentucky Teacher* at 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601, or kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us.

If you want assistance in using the growth chart, contact Cheryl Ungerleider at (502) 564-3421, (800) 533-5372 or cungerle@kde.state.ky.us. To see individual school growth charts, visit www.kentuckyschools.org/growthchart.asp.

To contact Barren County Assistant Superintendent Bill Walter, phone (270) 651-3787 or send e-mail to bwalter@barren.k12.ky.us (or through the KETS global list).

Commonwealth Accountability Testing System Long-Term Accountability Model



New guidebook streamlines needs assessment process

An updated guidebook is now available to help schools and districts develop their consolidated plans for improving teaching and learning.

The Department of Education designed the new "Consolidated Planning Guidebook" to improve the needs assessment component of the planning process. Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit has assured Kentucky educators that the new publication does not signal a new direction but provides helpful new tools.

"We are building on the existing consolidated planning foundation that all of us have worked with for the past several years," he said. "This new process will streamline the way schools and districts identify their areas of greatest need and make changes that will have the most significant and positive impact for students."

Wilhoit has encouraged district and school leaders to review the new process with their staffs and school councils, especially as it relates to the results of scholastic audits and reviews and to core content test scores arriving this fall.

The department based the improved needs assessment process on the "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement" and the state's long-term accountability system. The process replaces one that became known among educators as "the 146 questions."

The streamlined process, which will take effect with 2002-2003 planning, has two options:

- Local self-study through use of the descriptions for the "Standards and Indicators for School Improvement" (school or district level – see www.kentuckyschools.org/olsi/improve/schaudit/schaudit.asp);
- For schools, use of the 2001 "KASC Consolidated Planning Toolkit" from the Kentucky Association of School Councils (see www.kasc.net/train/consolid.html).

Instructions for the revised needs assessment are available online at www.kentuckyschools.org/olsi/conp/default.asp. The department will post the rest of the streamlined "Consolidated Planning Guidebook" on the following schedule:

- Action Planning by Nov. 1;
- Budget by Dec. 1;
- Submission Requirements by Jan. 1, 2002; District Plan due June 30, 2002.

For more information, contact Jack Gray, branch manager for council development in the Office of Leadership and School Improvement, at (502) 564-4201 or at jgray@kde.state.ky.us (or through the KETS global list).

Teachers: Are you overlooking an important employee benefit?

Investing tax-deferred dollars can make a BIG difference in your retirement income

By Christopher Helvey
Deferred Compensation Authority

Even though Kentucky teachers participate in the excellent Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System, many will need to supplement their retirement checks to maintain their present standard of living after they retire. Where will that supplementary money come from?

The Kentucky Public Employees' Deferred Compensation Authority, a state government agency, provides an easy, simple and low-cost way for teachers to build a supplementary retirement income.

"Deferred comp" is a voluntary, tax-deferred savings and investment system. Teachers (and other public employees) can contribute tax-deferred money to their personal retirement programs throughout their years of employment. They pay no current state or federal income taxes on deferred comp contributions or earnings as long as they remain in the plan. Their money and earnings grow and compound on a tax-deferred basis over the years.

Contributors to deferred compensation pay federal income taxes year by year as they withdraw

from their accounts, generally during retirement (when many are in a lower income tax bracket). They may not have to pay state income taxes on those withdrawals. Investments and earnings that remain in the plan continue to have the opportunity to grow tax-deferred.

Local school boards deduct teachers' contributions from their gross salary – before taxes – and forward the contributions directly to Kentucky Deferred Compensation for investment. Each teacher chooses from 31 investment options and can easily make changes to meet changing personal needs.

How does tax-deferred retirement investing affect monthly take-home income? As illustrated in "John Smith's" situation on this page, saving pre-tax dollars results in more spendable income than saving the same amount of after-tax dollars. Recent federal legislation makes the Kentucky Deferred Compensation program even more attractive by increasing the maximum allowable contributions. Starting in 2002, contributors to both plans (401K and 457) may be able to contribute up to \$22,000 per year. Those within three years of full retirement may be

eligible to defer even more through a "catch-up" program.

More than 52,000 public employees, including thousands of teachers, already participate in deferred comp, and it's easy to join them. Kentucky Deferred Compensation has service representatives throughout the state. Every Kentucky public school district will receive a visit from a representative at least once a year. To find out when a representative will visit your district, call (800) 542-2667.

Phone the same toll-free number to speak with a licensed representative or request an information and enrollment kit, which is also available on Kentucky Deferred Compensation's Web site: www.kentuckydcp.com.

Each year, the Kentucky Public Employees Deferred Compensation Authority holds a series of Investment Education Expos. Three expos remain on this year's schedule:

- Oct. 16 – Frankfort, Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center
- Oct. 17 – Danville, City Hall
- Oct. 18 – Louisville, Kentucky Fair and Expo Center (West Hall)

Two-hour information sessions begin at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. For details, click on the "News" link at www.kentuckydcp.com or phone (800) 542-2667. Offices are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT Monday through Friday, except for official state holidays.



'John Smith' considers the impact of investing pre-tax dollars

Teacher John Smith wants to build a nest egg to supplement his retirement income. He receives an annual salary of \$24,000 (\$1,000 per 24 paychecks per year). Smith decides to invest \$125 of every paycheck. He compares his options: investing pre-tax dollars in deferred comp (DC) or investing after-tax dollars from his take-home pay.

	With DC	Without DC
Gross paycheck (24 pays)	\$1,000	\$1,000
Pre-Tax DC Contribution	\$125	---
Taxable Income	\$875	\$1,000
Federal & State Taxes* (includes Medicare and Social Security)	\$168	\$194
After-Tax Savings Contribution	---	\$125
Spendable Amount	\$707	\$681

* Assumes 2000 tax rates for married Kentucky taxpayer with no children, filing jointly, using standard deduction.

Using the deferred comp option, Smith would save \$26 in taxes every paycheck – about \$625 a year – and his spendable income each month would be *higher* than it would be if he invested that \$125 in an after-tax plan. In addition, his deferred comp investment and earnings would compound without taxation, allowing a much greater potential for savings accumulation over time.

Schools help gather weather data for real-world applications in Kentucky

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Rainfall — more specifically the need to know when and where precipitation occurs in Kentucky — is causing weather stations to sprout throughout the state. In turn, the weather stations are cultivating rich opportunities for students to use local weather data to explore the world.

Four years ago, the desire to gather more accurate weather data prompted meteorologists at the Jackson (Breathitt County) office of the National Weather Service to look to schools for help. Assistance from School to Work Local Labor Market 19 and a one-time grant purchased \$300 automated weather stations for some Eastern Kentucky schools.

Today, more than 40 schools throughout Kentucky make up the Expanded Weather Observation Cooperative in Kentucky (EWOCK) and participate in INSITE, the Information Network for Science, Ideas, Technology and Education. The National Weather Service uses rainfall data the schools report, and the University of Kentucky Agricultural Weather Center posts the raw data — updated on the hour and half hour — on its Web site at www.agwx.ca.uky.edu. (Click on EWOCK in the list under “Other Pages” on the left side of the page.) The center also posts current weather tables and meteograms from participating schools.

Real-world Applications

Eric Thomas was an earth science teacher at Montgomery County High School when he installed one of the first automated weather stations in his classroom. He quickly saw that the data could have real-world applications in his science classes and in other content areas. He worked with Michael Lewis, sci-

ence and operations officer at the Jackson office, and Tom Priddy, director of the UK Ag Weather Center, to develop ways for teachers to integrate the real-time data from the weather stations in their science, social studies, mathematics and technology classes.

“The stations can’t teach weather,” Thomas said, “but there are ways for all teachers to use the information in their classrooms. It’s another tool for teachers to use.”

Fourth-grade teacher Lisa Goldsmith began using weather station data in her classes at Farmers Elementary in Rowan County about three years ago. The school closed last year, so she’s setting up the equipment in her new classroom at Morehead Elementary. Charting temperature, precipitation and humidity from the weather station will be a daily activity for Goldsmith’s students.

She also will use the weather data for activities during a two- to three-week unit of study on weather. Kentucky’s program of studies expects 4th-grade students to be able to understand weather changes from day to day and over the seasons and to be able to predict weather conditions when given information about temperature, wind direction and precipi-

tation.

Science teachers at Inez Middle School in Martin County access the weather information from their school station and the EWOCK Web site. Since the weather station isn’t in his classroom, 8th-grade science teacher Richard Osborn gets temperature and humidity data from the Internet for every class during the day. Students chart how the weather changes from one class period to the other.

“It opens up some pretty good discussions,” Osborn said. “We’ve looked at data for one month and at several years of archived weather information. We’ve been able to talk about how the data showed us drought periods and climatic changes, and we even saw where the rainfall data helped pinpoint the flood we had in 1977.”

In addition to keeping line graphs and charts, Osborn’s students conduct scientific experi-

ments using the data from the weather stations. Students also compare weather data collected at Inez Middle and Warfield Middle School, also in Martin County.

Thomas, now the education outreach director for the Space Science Center at Morehead State University, continues to work with Lewis and Priddy to involve more schools throughout the state in the weather station network. The trio is planning a statewide meteorology workshop during the summer of 2002.

Teachers can access EWOCK data without having a weather station at their school. However, UK’s Priddy is quick to point out the contribution schools make when they install a weather station.

“The schools provide ground-truth, local information we didn’t have before,” Priddy added. “The impact of this data ripples through the economy to all sectors of the state. Farmers, government agencies and many weather-dependent businesses access the information daily.”

Schools must purchase their own weather station for about \$300 to report data to EWOCK. However, the necessary software is free of charge. “We’ll do everything we can to help schools become a part of this large-scale weather project,” Priddy said.



Want to set up a weather station?

Sources for more information about EWOCK and INSITE:

- Michael Lewis, (606) 666-2560, ext. 766, or michael.lewis@noaa.gov;
- Tom Priddy, (859) 257-8803, ext. 245, or tpriddy@ca.uky.edu;
- Eric Thomas, (606) 783-2381 or e.thomas@morehead-st.edu.

Sources on how a weather station can be used in science and mathematics instruction:

- Lisa Goldsmith, (606) 784-7721 or lgoldsmi@rowan.k12.ky.us;
 - Richard Osborn, (606) 298-3045 or rosborn@martin.k12.ky.us.
- (Both teachers are on the KETS global list.)

Kentucky Historical Society Resources

Grants available for local history projects

The Kentucky Historical Society has competitive grant funds available as part of its Heritage Education program. There are two categories of assistance:

- Mini Grants – Applications are accepted and reviewed on the first of each month, Sept. 1 through March 1. Teachers may apply for up to \$250 to support field trips to historic sites and museums within 100 miles of the applicant's school. Funds may be used toward entry fees, bus expenses and substitute teacher support.
- Project Grants – There are two deadlines per year: Oct. 31 (for the next calendar year) and April 30 (for the next school year). Teachers may apply for up to \$500 to support classroom projects that involve the study of local community or county history.

For details, contact Michelle Willis at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4474, or michelle.willis@mail.state.ky.us.

Distance learning workshop features Cold War

The Kentucky Historical Society and the Indiana Historical Bureau have teamed up to provide a professional development opportunity for teachers: "The Cold War Is a HOT Topic: A Distance Learning Experience With the National Archives." This event will occur from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (EDT) on Oct. 16 at the Gheens Academy in Louisville.

The workshop will show teachers how to make the Cold War come alive in the classroom with documents available online from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The session features presentations by teachers and an interactive videoconference with NARA educator Lee Ann Potter. Participants will also learn how to get involved in the National History Day and Kentucky Junior Historical Society programs.

This professional development opportunity is free of charge, but preregistration is required. Contact Rebecca Hanly, (502) 564-1792, ext. 4475, or rebecca.hanly@mail.state.ky.us.

Environmental Education

Water education models available

The Kentucky Environmental Education Council, the Kentucky Division of Water and Northern Kentucky University are collaborating on a project to help teachers provide instruction on water quality issues. The project has placed tabletop watershed models, called Enviroscares, in 24 Kentucky schools and the Louisville Nature Center. Enviroscape models, each valued at \$2,000, provide a visual and hands-on way to teach students of all ages how runoff pollutes water systems and how communities can prevent water pollution.

The models are available for two-week loan to any school wishing to use them. Interdisciplinary lesson plans aligned with the state's core content are available for all grade levels.

For information, contact The Kentucky Environmental Education Council at (800) 882-5271, or go to the council's Web site at www.state.ky.us/agencies/envred. Click on "Resource Schools," then the appropriate education region, then the e-mail link to the contact person at the school nearest you.

Camps provide outdoor learning

Kentucky State Parks invites students to its Recreation, Environment and Cultural History (REACH) Education Camps. Participating students learn about Kentucky history where it happened as they develop a lifelong awareness of their natural and cultural surroundings.

Camp activities include aquatics, geology, state history, plant identification and outdoor recreation skills. Teachers receive materials that help make learning in natural science, mathematics, history, language arts and social skills.

Each of Kentucky's state resort parks employs naturalists or recreation supervisors who can assist teachers in developing programs. These trained professionals have extensive knowledge of the natural, cultural and historical significance of their parks and region.

The camp costs \$40 per student, which covers one night's stay in a state resort park lodge, three meals and activities. The same cost applies to teachers and chaperones.

Educators may schedule camps on weekdays between Labor Day and Memorial Day. To make reservations, contact the group sales coordinator at the state resort park of your choice. Ask for a REACH Education Camp booking.

To find out more about this program and to obtain a copy of the Teacher's Planning Guide, contact the chief naturalist at the Kentucky Department of Parks, Division of Recreation and Interpretation, 500 Mero Street, 11th Floor, Frankfort, KY 40601-1974; phone: (502) 564-3006, extension 246.

Information is also available online at www.kystateparks.com. Click on "Education."



Photo by Rick McComb

Rally 'Round the Reader

Entry-level primary students gather to hear teacher Beverly Craycraft read to them at North Middletown Elementary in Bourbon County.

Talk to us!

Teachers: **Kentucky Teacher** wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.



E-mail kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us



Phone (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372
(toll free in Kentucky)



Fax (502) 564-6470



Write **Kentucky Teacher**
1914 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

TIP your students to the arts

There's still time – until Oct. 15 – for teachers to apply for the Kentucky Arts Council's next round of Teacher Incentive Program (TIP) grants.

TIP is a residency program that helps teachers bring artists into their schools for one- or two-week residencies to demonstrate their art forms and share their creativity. Teachers collaborate with practicing, professional artists on the design and implementation of innovative projects that enable them to integrate the arts into daily instruction. Residencies may focus on any artistic discipline and include five or 10 days of the artist's time on site, involving the students and teachers directly in the creative process.

The council provides an almost two-to-one cash match for TIPs. The postmark deadline is Oct. 15 for residencies occurring between January and May. The deadline for residencies occurring between July and December is March 1, 2002.

Applications and information are available on the council's Web site, www.kyarts.org, under Arts Education. Teachers may select their artists from the council's approved roster (also posted on the Web site) but are not required to do so.

For more information, call Arts Education Program Director John S. Benjamin at (888) 833-2787, Ext. 4813, or send him an e-mail message at John.Benjamin@mail.state.ky.us.

At last! A Web address that's easy to remember!

www.kentuckyschools.org


Tell others about this new route to the Department of Education home page.

No need to change your electronic bookmark, though. The original address, www.kde.state.ky.us, will also take you there.

Watch

Inside Kentucky Schools

A Kentucky Department of Education TV Production



30 minutes of news and features about education in Kentucky

Second & fourth Saturday of every month

- noon Eastern/11 a.m. Central on KET
- 5:30 p.m. Eastern/4:30 p.m. Central on KET2

Also check TV listings for air times on local cable stations.

For program information, visit www.kentuckyschools.org/comm/mediasvcs/

Host
Pia Cummings

What a Deal!

State's Division of Surplus Properties invites schools and districts to shop its 'store to explore'

By Chris Kellogg
Finance and Administration Cabinet

Need a bargain file cabinet? How about a solid wood desk or upholstered chairs for the office or a meeting room? Musical instruments? Water fountains? Even a forklift or a fire truck!

The Division of Surplus Properties, an agency in the state Finance and Administration Cabinet, may be one of state government's best-kept secrets, a low-cost source for all kinds of items agencies and schools need. Think of the Surplus Properties warehouse as a premium discount store with a constantly changing inventory of refurbished state-owned property.

With just a phone call or a visit, educators may locate exactly what they need at a low price. Marshall Lowe, superintendent of Green County Public Schools, is one administrator who has been pleased with the items and the service. Surplus Properties has "bent over backwards" to be accommodating, he reports.

Here's how the system works: Surplus Properties receives used items from state and other government entities that no longer needed them. In

partnership with the East Kentucky Correction Complex in West Liberty, the agency has the items refinished, reupholstered, repaired, mended, polished and otherwise refurbished as necessary. The items are then available for purchase to eligible Kentucky government agencies, schools and non-profit organizations that register for account cards.

New items arrive almost daily, so what's available one day can change the next. To check on the availability of specific items, or to browse the warehouse, call (502) 564-4836 or check out the Web site at www.state.ky.us/agencies/adm/SurplusProperty.htm. Watch the Web site for auctions, too.

The Surplus Properties Warehouse is at 514 Barrett Avenue near downtown Frankfort, one block off of Holmes Street (State Route 2261) near the state motor pool and a few blocks from the State Office Building (Transportation Cabinet). The hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday.

Note: Finance and Administration summer employee Katherine Dunagan contributed to this article.



Photo by Rick McComb

Art on a Grand Scale

Art saluted a local economic and recreational icon when Cumberland County High School students decorated 29 fish sculptures. Students used a variety of themes, some mirroring the styles of master artists. "Sunny Van Gogh," the work of student artists Ashley Decker and Justin Spears, got a close look from Metcalfe County clay artist Diane Braber-Pasley. At the end of the project, sponsored in part by the Cumberland County Arts Council, local businesses and individuals purchased the sculptures. Proceeds will support the high school's Art Department. For details, contact Charlotte Cash at (270) 864-3451.

Looking for grant sources? Try these!

- Philanthropy News Digest-K-12 Funding Opportunities – Links for teachers seeking grants for a variety of purposes, including professional development in the uses of technology. <http://fdncenter.org/pnd/20000328/funding.html>
- Information on U.S. Department of Education Initiatives – Comprehensive information on applying for grants and listings of funding opportunities. www.ed.gov/funding.html
- School Grants – A collection of resources and tips to help K-12 educators apply for and obtain special grants for a variety of projects. www.schoolgrants.org
- eSchool News School Funding Center – Information on up-to-the-minute grant programs, funding sources and technology funding. www.eschoolnews.org/funding
- Magic Johnson Foundation – Supports inner-city high school seniors whose potential for academic success is hindered by poverty. www.magicjohnson.org/mnm/Scholarship/index.html
- Raise More Money: The Best of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal – While not specifically for schools, this anthology of 56 articles may provide ideas and tools schools can use. www.chardonpress.com/titles/raise.html#articles

School Safety Week is Oct. 14-20

**By Doris Dearen Settles
Center for School Safety**

Safe schools mean successful students. Kentucky Safe Schools Week is October 14-20, and it's coming to your classroom!

Gov. Paul Patton will kick off the week with a news conference from the Capitol. KET Star Channel 705 will broadcast the event at 10 a.m. EDT on Oct. 15. Patton will proclaim Safe Schools Week and join Kentucky students in leading the Pledge Against School Violence.

The Kentucky Center for School Safety encourages all citizens to come together and focus on awareness, prevention and cooperation during Kentucky Safe Schools Week. Involving youth in prevention efforts is a critical piece of the school safety puzzle. Knox Central High School student Kerri Mitchell has been involved in safe schools efforts for most of her teen years, speaking to elementary and middle school students about respect for others and breaking the code of silence. "Research indicates the strong impact peers have upon one another," said Mitchell, "yet rarely are students turned to as leaders of intervention/prevention programs."

To create youth-led community events, the Center for School Safety is working through the 186 Family,

Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapters throughout the state, providing seed money, pledge cards, ribbons and other support to encourage school safety efforts at the local level. Most FCCLA chapters are in area high schools but are collaborating with schools at all levels, as well as community organizations, to create community events that raise anti-violence awareness and have a positive, proactive effect on safe schools issues. Contact district FCCLA advisors for more information and for copies of the Center for School Safety's Pledge Against School Violence, which asks community members, parents, educators and students alike to make these commitments:

- to understand that guns have no place in school or in disputes;
- to refuse to participate in or tolerate bullying or violent behaviors;
- to have the courage to break the code of silence.

The state's Safe Schools Week observance complements a national campaign sponsored by the National School Safety Center. The week also includes the National Pledge Against Gun Violence (Oct. 17). For more information, visit www.kysafeschools.org or contact the Center for School Safety at (859) 257-9105 or toll free at (877) 805-4277.

New book on middle grades is available free online

The National Middle School Association and Stenhouse Publishers offer a new publication free of charge on the Internet. "Meet Me in the Middle: Becoming an Accomplished Middle-Level Teacher," by Rick Wormeli, is available for reading at www.stenhouse.com.

Wormeli is a National Board Certified Teacher at Rachel Carson Middle School in Herndon, Virginia, and a columnist for Middle Ground magazine. In this book, he draws on the wisdom of educators, researchers and 20 years of per-

sonal experience in the middle school classroom to lay out a vision of what responsive middle-level teaching can be.

The book offers strategies, theories and specific examples for addressing key middle-level teaching challenges.

The 264-page book is also available for purchase for \$22.50 from Stenhouse Publishers, 477 Congress Street, Suite 4B, Portland, ME 04101-3451; phone (888) 363-0566 or (207) 253-1600; fax (800) 833-9164.

Department seeks applicants for Highly Skilled Educators Program

The Kentucky Department of Education seeks dedicated teachers, administrators and other certified staff to serve as highly skilled educators in the state's assistance program for schools.

The agency will select approximately 32 individuals to participate in the program, which places educators in schools that do not meet their goals in the statewide assessment and accountability system. Highly skilled educators act as consultants, working with school staffs to improve teaching and learning by using the state's

"Standards and Indicators for School Improvement."

Each educator will undergo extensive training before and during two years of participation in the program. Educators are not placed in their home districts.

Applications are available on the department's Web site at www.kentuckyschools.org/olsi/improve/hse/application_for_HSE_program.asp. Mail applications on or before Oct. 15 to Diana Dattilo, Division of School Improvement, 500 Mero St., 6th Floor, Frankfort, KY 40601; fax (502) 564-7820. Direct questions to Dattilo at (502) 564-2116 or ddattilo@kde.state.ky.us.

THE Bulletin Board

By Lisa Y. Gross

Kentucky Department of Education

KCA conference to feature sessions on group counseling

The Kentucky Counseling Association (KCA) will host its annual conference and pre-conference workshops Oct. 16-19 at the Galt House in Louisville. Among the presenters will be group counseling expert Gerald Corey of California State University and Kentucky First Lady Judi Patton, an advocate for women and children who have been victims of violence or abuse. Conference sessions will cover a range of counseling challenges.

Participants may qualify for a variety of leadership and professional development credits. Details and a conference registration form are online at www.kyca.org. The deadline for preregistration is Oct. 6.

CONTACT: Bill Braden, (502) 223-5905; 622 Timothy Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601; bradenkca@aol.com

Keep your students 'In the Dark'

"In the Dark," an interactive exhibit about how animals adapt to dark environments, will be on view at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort from Oct. 6, 2001, to Jan. 13, 2002.

Created by the Cincinnati Museum Center, the exhibit explores animal life at night, underground, in caves and under water. An elementary-level introduction to the exhibit and an intermediate- to middle-level museum theater performance based on legends and lore from Kentucky's cave country are available for school groups that schedule in advance.

To schedule, contact Carol McGurk at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4461, or carol.mcgurk@mail.state.ky.us. For more information about the exhibit, visit www.kyhistory.org or www.cincymuseum.org/information/exhibits.asp.

Send fan mail to the troops

Students, classrooms, schools and campus groups throughout the nation will again be writing cards and letters to military personnel at home and abroad through the Christmas Military Mail Campaign.

The mail goes to Friends of Our Troops headquarters for distribution throughout the world. A continuation of the Vietnam Mail Call established in 1965, the program has served thousands of U.S. military personnel.

Many educators have made the program part of their instruction. For more information, visit www.militarymail.org/schools.htm or write to Friends of Our Troops, PO Box 65408, Fayetteville, NC 28306.

Poster series features ecosystems of Kentucky rivers and streams

Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources offers teachers a free series of four full-color posters illustrating the rich ecosystems of Kentucky rivers and streams. The 22" by 34" posters, designed by wildlife artist Rick Hill, identify the life forms found in Kentucky's wetlands, small streams, streams and big rivers.

To preview the posters and download the online teacher guides, go to www.kdfwr.state.ky.us and click on "Education," then "Aquatic Education." To request one or more posters, write to the department at #1 Game Farm Road, Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (502) 564-4762 or (800) 858-1549; or send e-mail to lonnie.nelson@mail.state.ky.us.

KCTE/LA 2002 Conference set for February

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (KCTE/LA) will host its 66th annual convention Feb. 8 and 9 at the Drawbridge Inn and Convention Center in Fort Mitchell. The theme will be "Creating a Legacy of Student Literacy." Speakers include Ralph Fletcher, author and consultant; Melissa Forney, educator, author and writing consultant; Carol Jago, director of the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA; and Dianne Aprille, journalist and teacher.

The cost for the conference is \$95, which includes membership fees. The preregistration deadline is Jan. 15, 2002.

CONTACT: Stephanie Kirk, conference@kcte.org; KCTE/LA's Web site, www.kcte.org

Need information about teacher certification?

Kentucky's teacher certification agency, the Education Professional Standards Board, was once an arm of the Department of Education but is now an independent agency attached to the Governor's Office.

For assistance with teacher preparation and certification matters, contact the Education Professional Standards Board at 1024 Capital Center Drive, Suite 225, Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 573-4606; dcert@kde.state.ky.us.

The board has posted a wealth of information on its Web site at www.kentuckyschools.org/otec/epsb/.

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Kentucky Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2001

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Photo by Rick McComb

HELPING HAND – Clay Thomason helps Ashton Davis tie her new shoes in the hallway of Whitesville Elementary in Daviess County. As entry-level primary students, both could be members of Kentucky's high school graduating class of 2014. For a look at how Kentucky's 5-year-olds are getting off to a strong start in one core content area, see Page 5.

"We were not going to improve our general dropout rate without doing something about our special student population. Almost seven years ago, we focused our efforts on retaining special-needs students in school. Five years later, the dropout rate of this group had decreased from 63 percent to 5 percent."

Carol Sturgill, exceptional children director for Johnson County Schools.
To read about the district's dropout prevention success, turn to Page 8.

Kentucky Department of Education Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
Visit the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site: www.kentuckyschools.org